

Audrey Broadwater  
Holly Academy  
8<sup>th</sup> Grade

### Hold On

"I am invincible."

As I'm sitting here, listening to John Mayer sing his sweet lullabies, a subconscious thought forces its way into my consciousness. It's an image, a memory of sitting there on the landing, stunned. My mother has just told me I will be uprooting my entire life, to move from Highland Elementary to Holly Academy. At that moment, frozen in time, I remember the gross, dusty carpet reaching up to caress my small feet. My mom standing there with a sad, pitying, look on her face. It was the worst feeling ever, knowing you'd never see all your friends again. Since I knew throwing a fit wouldn't help, I headed off to this strange, dry, unmarked territory.

I had an idea that not participating in class, never turning in assignments, and just being lazy would convince my parents that this was not the school for me. It actually did the opposite. You see, Holly Academy does not tolerate children who think they can do anything they want. Slackers are held back, and that's what happened to me. Talking to my teachers brought me a whole new perspective on this situation. Although I was very sad to see my new friends move on without me, I was also very apprehensive about the coming year. You know how people always have that one teacher they'd like to thank? Well, I do too. Her name is Mrs. Laurie Shephard, and she was my second year of fifth grade teacher. I remember thinking that she wasn't like my first year of fifth grade at all. We liked to talk about things like my grades and my family. Mrs. Shephard wasn't very talkative at first, but as the year wore on and sixth grade drew nearer, she always encouraged me to do my best. At the end of the year, I had improved greatly. One C- was all I had to work on.

The next year I was so proud-not even a C- at the end of the year. Sixth grade was slightly hard, because it was the first year of middle school. Seventh grade was really cool, because I had good grades, which meant I could go to Chicago. That, my friend, is worth good grades. This year, it is eighth grade. This year is also very hard for me, because three of my very best friends were invited to be a part of NJHS. I was not. It hurts to see them moving up without me. I also have a big regret; one C- each term barred NJHS. That, however, is cause for me to rally and get my grades up to all A+'s, except for math, which would be a B+. I will not let a few measly C's get me down. Teachers and friends have taught me that no matter a grade on a test, I am most certainly not stupid.

You asked all of us competing for this prize to tell you what our school means to us. I told you what has happened to me since that fateful day, when the green, gross, dusty carpet touched my small feet as I stared uncomprehendingly up at my mother. In case you didn't get the message, here's what my school means to me.

It means home.